

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—James Freeman Clarke

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER

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IN THE COOL OF THE EVENING

*The Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the
day. GENESIS iii, 8.*

In the cool of the evening, when the low, sweet
whispers waken,

When the laborers turn them homeward and
the weary have their will,

When the censers of the roses o'er the forest
aisles are shaken,

Is it but the wind that cometh o'er the far,
green hill?

They say 'tis but the sunset wind that wanders
through the heather,

Rustles all the meadow grass and bends the
dewy fern;

They say 'tis but the wind that bows the reeds
in prayer together

And fills the shaken pools with fire along the
shadowy burn.

In the beauty of the twilight, in the garden that
He loveth,

They have veiled His lovely vesture with the
darkness of a name;

Through His garden, through His garden, is it
but the wind that moveth?

No more? But Oh, the miracle, the miracle
is the same!

In the cool of the evening, when the sky is an
old story,

Slowly dying but remembered, aye, and loved
with passion still,—

Hush! . . . the fringes of His garment, in
the fading, golden glory,

Softly rustle as He cometh o'er the far, green
hill.

—Alfred Noyes.

WHAT YOKES ARE FOR

Christ says "Take my yoke upon you and learn
of me." But why, while professing to give rest,
does he with the next breath whisper "burden"?
Is the Christian life an additional weight to
the woe of life, a heavy restriction and tram-
melling of all that is joyous and free in the
world?

It is astounding how so glaring a misunder-
standing of this plain sentence should ever have
passed into currency. Did you ever stop to ask
what a yoke is really for? Is it to be a burden to
the animal that wears it? It is just the opposite.
It is to make its burden light. Attached to the
oxen in any other way than by a yoke, the plough
would be intolerable. Worked by means of a
yoke, it is light. A yoke is not a contrivance for
making work hard; it is a device to make hard
labor light. It is meant,—not to give pain, but
to save pain. And yet men sometimes speak of
the yoke of Christ as if it were a slavery, and look
upon those who wear it as objects of compassion!
Such a misunderstanding of the phrase makes
Christ a taskmaster, narrowing life by petty
restrictions, calling for self-denial where none is
necessary!

In Christ's illustration, "yoke" means the
simple harness or ox-collar of the Eastern peasant.
It is the sort of literal wooden yoke which he,
with his own hands, had probably often made in
the carpenter shop. He knew the difference
between a smooth yoke and a rough one, a bad
fit and a good fit; the difference also that it
made to the patient animal who had to wear it.
The rough yoke galled, and the burden was
heavy. The smooth yoke caused no pain, and
the load was lightly drawn. The badly fitted
harness was a misery; the well-fitted collar was
easy.

And what was the "burden"? It was simply
human life, the general burden of life which all
must carry with them from the cradle to the
grave. Christ saw that men took life painfully.
To some it was a weariness, to others a failure, to
all a struggle. How to carry this burden of life
had been the whole world's problem. It is still
the whole world's problem. And here is Christ's
solution:—"Carry it as I do. Take life as I
take it. Look at it from my point of view.
Interpret it upon my principles. Take my yoke
and learn of me; for my yoke works easily, sits
right upon the shoulders, and therefore my
burden is light."

There is no suggestion here that religion will absolve any man from bearing burdens. What Christianity does propose is to make them bearable. Christ's yoke is his prescription for the best and happiest method of living.

Men often harness themselves to the work of the world in clumsy and unnatural ways. The harness they put on is a rough and ill-fitted collar; they make its strain and friction past enduring, and the whole nature gets sore. "Touchiness" is a morbid condition of the inner disposition,—inflamed self-love. The cure is to shift the yoke to some other place. It is the beautiful work of Christianity everywhere to adjust the burden of life to those who bear it and adjust them to it. It has a miraculous gift of healing. It sets human nature right with life, harmonizing it with surrounding things, and restoring those who are jaded with fatigue and dust. What was a ton yesterday is not half a ton today.

So, without changing one's circumstances,—merely by offering a wider horizon and a different standard, it alters the whole aspect of the world.
—*Henry Drummond.*

THE PILGRIMS IN DOUBTING CASTLE

(This is a part of the famous old story of Pilgrim's Progress. Christian and his friend Hopeful, in the course of their journey to find the Celestial City, make a mistake in the road and get lost. In the darkness, they have to stay in the woods all night. *Editor.*)

At last, finding a little shelter, they sat down there until daybreak; but, being weary, they fell asleep. Now there was not far from where they lay, a castle, called Doubting Castle, the owner whereof was Giant Despair, and it was in his grounds they were now sleeping; wherefore he, getting up in the morning early, caught Christian and Hopeful asleep.

With a grim and surly voice he bade them awake, and asked them whence they were and what they did. They told him that they were pilgrims and that they had lost their way. Then said the giant, "You have this night trespassed by trampling in and lying on my grounds, and therefore you must go along with me." So they were forced to go, because he was stronger than they. The giant drove them before him and put them into a very dark dungeon in his castle. Here they lay from Wednesday morning to Saturday night, without a bit of bread or a drop of drink or any light or anyone to speak to them.

Giant Despair had a wife whose name was Diffidence. When he was gone to bed, he told his wife what he had done,—how he had taken a couple of prisoners and cast them into his dungeon. She asked him who they were, whence

they came and whither they were bound, and he told her. Then she counselled him, that, when he arose in the morning, he should beat them without any mercy. So, when he arose, he gets him a grievous crab-tree cudgel and goes down to the dungeon and falls upon them and beats them fearfully, so that they were not able to help themselves or to turn upon the floor. This done, he withdraws, and leaves them there to mourn under their distress; so all that day they spent their time in nothing but sighs and bitter lamentations.

When the next morning was come, he goes to them in a surly manner as before; and they desired him to let them go. With that, he looked ugly upon them, and was rushing on them to make an end of them, when he fell into one of his fits (for he sometimes, in sunshiny weather, fell into fits), and lost for a time the use of his hand wherefore he withdrew, and left them to consider what to do. Then did the prisoners consult between themselves.

"Brother," said Christian, "what shall we do? The life we now live is miserable. For my part, I know not whether is best, to live thus or to die."

Hopeful replied, "Indeed, our present condition is dreadful. But let us consider that all the law is not in the hand of Giant Despair; others, so far as I can understand, have been taken by him as well as we, and yet have escaped. Who knows but that God, who made the world, may cause that Giant Despair may die? or that, at some time or other, he may forget to lock us in, or that he may in a short time have another of his fits before us, and may lose the use of his limbs? If ever that should come to pass again, I am resolved to pluck up heart and try my utmost to get from under his hand. I was a fool that I did not try to do it before."

Towards evening the giant goes down into the dungeon. When he came there he found them alive, and truly alive was all; they could do little, but breathe. The old giant wondered that he could not bring them to an end. But his wife said, "I fear they live in hope that someone will come to relieve them, or that they have picked locks about them, by the means of which they hope to escape." "Thinkest thou so, my dear?" said the giant. "I will search them in the morning."

Well, on Saturday, about midnight, they began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day. And a little before it was day Christian, as one half amazed, broke out into speech:—"What a fool I am," quoth he, "to lie in this dungeon, when I may walk at liberty. I have a key in my bosom called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle." Then said Hopeful, "That is good news, brother: pluck it out of thy bosom and try."

Then Christian took the key and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt, as he turned the key, gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then he went to the outward door that leads into the castle-yard, and with his key opened that door also. After, he went to the iron gate, for that must be opened too; that lock went hard, yet the key did open it. Then they thrust open the gate to make their escape with speed; but the gate, as it opened, made such a creaking that it waked Giant Despair; hastily rising to pursue his prisoners, he felt his limbs to fail; for his fits took him again, so that he could by no means go after them. Then they came to the King's highway again, and were safe.—*John Bunyan.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmont Way, Quincy, Mass., Tel. Quincy 1140.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "*Shall I send such a book to such a person?*" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

It will greatly aid those who are sending books, magazines, cards, and so forth, if all our correspondents who send requests for their children will take pains to mention their names and ages. Lacking such information, one is likely to make mistakes; for a boy of twelve and a girl of seven are not usually interested in the same things or benefited by the same things.

When requesting books for the first time, correspondents should always give, as reference, the name and address of their clergyman.

It is necessary that letters be written with ink, not simply with a pencil.

REQUESTS

1. Mrs. W. E. Henderson, Rolla, Kansas, would like "The Centuries of Abydos", or any reference book that would help in teaching ancient history in a little rural high school.

2. Will Laud, Decatur, Tennessee, Route 4, Box 4, would like "The Black Man's Burden" by Holzclaw and "Linda; the life of a slave girl."

3. Mrs. Sallie Loster, 607 Richie Street, Gainsville, Texas, wants a correspondent. She has a sick husband and three little children. "Oh, it is a miserable life,—not getting anything to read!"

4. Mrs. Jennie M. Shough, Dodson, Virginia,

would like to correspond with some good woman. She has a large family of children and would like story-books, catechism and Bible teaching for them.

5. I would appreciate any kind of reading matter, also pieces for patchwork. I am the mother of six children, from a twelve year old boy to a two months old baby. There are two boys and four girls. We are poor people, living on rented land. My husband works very hard and is not stout either. We live in a rough mountain country fifteen miles from the railroad. I get so lonesome sometimes. I would appreciate cards and pictures for the children. I do all my work and attend to the children. Mrs. Sam R. Via, Elamsville, Virginia.

6. I am a girl fourteen years old, in the sixth grade. I would like very much to receive good books and reading matter suitable for a girl of my age. My father and mother are poor and I am denied the advantages of such things to a great extent. For reference, you can write to my pastor, Rev. Jonathan Miller, Clifton, North Carolina, or my school-teacher, Mr. Wade H. Jones, of Clifton. I have three brothers, one, seven, and ten years old. Effie Hartsoe, Clifton, North Carolina.

7. I live in a lonely place in the country, among the hills, eight miles from the nearest town. I am a widow with seven children ranging in age from six years to twenty. I would appreciate any good reading matter for them, also any letters from friends who may be willing to write. I would be thankful for some quilt pieces. Mrs. R. M. Stoker, Albemarle, North Carolina, Route 1, Box 34.

8. I would be so glad of some good reading, especially *The Cheerful Letter*. My husband has been sick and he enjoys reading. I have seven children,—four girls and three boys. My health is very bad and I am not able to do much, so would be pleased to have scraps of gingham or calico. Mrs. B. J. Hall, Dodson, Virginia.

9. I am a poor woman living in the country, with seven children from two to nineteen years old. We would be glad of good reading, as we are not able to buy it; also, if anyone can send me bed-quilt pieces I would be glad. What little we had was burned up some time ago, and we are left with very little. I hope some of the friends can write me, for I get very lonely sometimes. God bless you in your good work. My minister's address is Rev. G. M. Phelps.—Mrs. Mary E. Hagey, Reidsville, North Carolina.

10. I wish to thank the *Cheerful Letter* friends for their kindness. The children enjoyed so much the pictures and stories. If it would not be asking too much, I should appreciate some little recitations for children from six to ten years old, in day school and Sunday School. Thank you all many times for your kindness. Mrs.

A. A. Nance, Peachland, North Carolina, Route 1.

11. Miss A. A. Simpson, Farmville, Virginia, Route 5, will be glad to receive reading, also cards and picture books for her niece, four years old.

12. I enjoy reading *The Cheerful Letter* very much. I want to thank those who have sent me reading; and thanks for the calendar. I would like to get quilt scraps,—they would be greatly appreciated,—and my girls would be so glad to have some crochet cotton. Mrs. Clara Liner, Englewood, Tennessee, Route 2.

13. Jack Chenault, Newtown P. O., King and Queen County, Virginia, would be very glad to join the Book and Magazine Club. He is a young college man, principal of the high school, in a section quite isolated, owing to lack of railroads, and entirely without access to any library. He does not need school-books, but would be extremely glad of any others,—classics or standard,—of poetry, fiction, biography, politics, travel, essays etc.; also current numbers of any of the standard magazines like *Harper's*, the *Century*, *Outlook*, *Arena*, *National*, etc., and of English and French periodicals.

14. I wish to thank all who have sent me reading, nice calendars and quilt pieces since last Christmas. I am not able to write letters to each one; some of the addresses were torn off in the mail. But I do wish to thank them all through the *Cheerful Letter*. I am not having any better health, and can hardly go at times. I shall be fifty-five years old on the 14th of July; I hope my good friends will remember me on that day. I should be glad to get some quilt scraps too, and will pass along all reading matter to others. I know many who need reading. I hope that the good work will go on and that I shall be remembered. Mrs. Henry Nelson, Critz, Virginia, Route 1, Box 26.

15. I live in the mountains of western North Carolina and have four children,—boys of sixteen and eight, girls of fourteen and three. We do not live near any town or library, so I would be glad to receive books and magazines for myself and the children. I would also like to have some reading matter and quilt pieces for my mother, who is an invalid. Mrs. Edith Welch, Clifton, North Carolina.

16. Mrs. Ada Morris, Wadeville, North Carolina, Route 1, Box 47, asks for reading for her family,—four boys and three girls,—saying that her mother, who lives with her, would be glad of scraps for patchwork.

17. Mrs. Isabel Bailey, Toronto, Woodson County, Kansas, is most thankful for reading that has been sent. She has been very ill and unable to write, but has appreciated all that she has received, and will be grateful for any good reading during her convalescence.

18. Nellie R. Coffey, Alto, Virginia, a twelve year old girl, asks for cards.

19. Mrs. Etta Dalton, Sandy Level, Virginia, wishes to thank those who have sent her reading.

20. Mrs. Etta M. Cole, Star, Holt County, Nebraska, a bed-fast invalid for two years, would be so glad to receive the *World's Work*, "Eugene Aram" by Bulwer-Lytton, "The Mill on the Floss," Browning's shorter poems, and any of the McGuffey Readers, especially the Fourth.

21. Mrs. Hannah Fraley, Dayton, Tennessee, Route 4, Box 197, living in a lonely place and not young, asks for cards and good stories for herself and her husband.

22. Mrs. P. D. Mabe, Critz, Virginia, a sixteen year old mother, asks for the *Delineator* and the *Cheerful Letter*.

23. Mrs. H. A. Nance, Peachland, North Carolina, Route 1, Box 48, a lonely widow and a cripple, will be thankful for reading and patchwork pieces.

NOTICE

Letters written with lead pencil will not be printed. See special notice at the head of the Book and Magazine Club.

STARTING HOUSE PLANTS FOR NEXT WINTER

Cuttings or slips are usually best started in a shallow dish of rather gritty sand, though geraniums will root in any kind of soil, sandy or not. The slip is most likely to prosper if it is neither an extremely old branch of the parent plant nor extremely new and tender, but between the two. Keep the sand in the rooting dish thoroughly wet, though not muddy, and set it in a warm, sunny place. Begonia and gloxinia can be started from a leaf of an older plant. Make a few cuts across the thick ribs on the back of a leaf, and lay it (cuts down) on a dish of damp sand until rootlets are well started. The carnation is best propagated by layering. Bend down a branch of the old plant, giving it a little twist at the bend, or cutting it part-way (not wholly) through; then insert the bend in soil. The branch will soon send down new roots of its own. When it has done so, cut the new plant quite separate from the old one and pot it.

The best general rule about soils for potted plants is this:—if a plant has few roots and those large ones, a rather close, firm soil will suit it better than a light, spongy one. Those having hard, wiry roots,—like the rose,—nearly always prefer soil with considerable clay that will make itself firm and compact. Plants with very fine, hair-like roots do best in a light soil or one mixed with sand, because that will not pack down too hard. A good average soil is prepared by mixing

one part ordinary garden loam with one part of turfy matter scraped from the lower side of sods, containing fine grass roots, and one part of a half-and-half mixture of sand with well rotted cow manure.

Old plants which are being saved for next winter need summer care. I advise keeping them in their pots, in some sheltered place through the summer months. Look them over carefully once a week, and check the tendency of any one branch (of a geranium, for example), to shoot up far ahead of other branches on the same plant. Nip off such a shoot at the end and give the other branches a chance to catch up. If a plant persists in growing too tall and "leggy," cut off the top, and keep on doing this until new branches start out along the stalk. Now is the time to make your plants assume the bushy, compact shape that you will want them to have when you remove them to the house. You will get a much greater flowering surface by means of this training. Sometimes plants refuse to branch as you want them to, but don't give up. When they find they cannot make growth to suit themselves, they will grow as you want them to.

Stir the soil in the pots once a week, but, if fresh soil was given them in the spring, do not add any fertilizer during the summer. You do not want to force the growth at all, but simply to keep the plant growing steadily and healthily.—*E. E. Rexford in Home Floriculture.*

A FEW OF THE SUMMER BIRTHDAYS

July 4, 1776, we always remember as the birthday of our nation. That was when the representatives of our American colonies signed the Declaration of Independence.

July 15, 1607, certain Dutch parents over in Holland had a son who afterwards became one of the greatest artists of all lands and all times. We know him as Rembrandt. With a few masterly strokes of a bit of charcoal on a piece of paper he could make people see things just like life. He had a wonderful gift for finding beauty where most of us fancy there is none,—especially the beauty and fascination of half-dark places, full of deep shadows, and in the shaded side of things away from the sunlight. His paintings in oil colors, kept in art museums in different parts of the world, are still eagerly studied by those who want to learn his happy secret of how to see, and by painters who try to learn his method of showing what he did see.

July 17, 1674, was the birthday of the English writer, Isaac Watts. Just about two hundred years ago he was writing religious verses which both English and American folk still like to sing. Most of us grown-ups know "Joy to the world,

the Lord is come," "O God, our help in ages past," "Come Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove," "When I survey the wondrous cross"; almost everybody knows the hymn popularly called Old Hundred (because it is a rhymed version of the hundredth psalm). It was Watts who wrote that version, beginning "From all that dwell below the skies."

August 15, 1771, Walter Scott was born at Edinburgh. As a boy he was hungry for history, poetry and old stories, such as country grandfathers could repeat, so, though lameness and delicate health kept him out of rollicking amusements, he was happily busy. Nobody who knew him then could guess that he would become one of the most popular authors of the nineteenth century; but those of us who remember sitting up till after midnight over a first reading of *Ivanhoe* agree that he deserves his fame. We who have thrilled over the adventures and enjoyed the descriptions in *The Lady of the Lake*, can understand how such stories in verse captured the fancy of British and American readers when they were first printed. Indeed, they set people journeying to picturesque parts of Scotland which had never before been thought worth seeing. Book-lovers owe Sir Walter a great debt of pleasure for the way in which he told stories of European history; his genius makes the men and women and happenings of times long past as real as people and events before our eyes.

A farmer's wife hurrying from milking the cows to the kitchen, from the kitchen to the churn, from the churn to the woodshed, and back to the kitchen stove, was asked if she wanted to vote. "No, I certainly do not. If there's one little thing that the men-folk can do alone, for goodness' sake let 'em do it."—*The Argonaut.*

CHEERFUL LETTER ANNUAL REPORT 1921-1922

During the year the work of the Cheerful Letter Exchange has steadily increased in all directions. Several new branches have been formed and many of the older ones have come into closer touch with headquarters. At the eight meetings held the first Friday of each month from October to May inclusive, the average attendance has been 57,—a gain of three over last year. Under the efficient leadership of Mrs. Nichols, who has presided at each meeting, a greater enthusiasm has been aroused and a fine spirit of coöperation has been developed. To twenty or more branches she has carried fresh encouragement and inspiration by her

presence and by her clear account of the aims and accomplishments of the Exchange.

This year the sending of monthly reports accompanied by personal letters to far-way Branches has proved unusually satisfactory. These reports, eighty in number, have brought back most appreciative acknowledgments. Chairmen have shown awakened interest and a strong desire to become more intimately acquainted with the different phases of the work. A letter from a distant state, quoted in part below, shows how valuable is this closer touch:—

"I had never seen, and did not know of the little paper, until you mentioned it in your letter. Later I applied to the Post Office Mission for a copy, which was sent me, and from that and the report I learned the scope of the work as well as its kind intent. I shared your enthusiasm as I read it, and regretted that I had missed an experience so pleasurable and gratifying during the past year. I appreciate that the books and other items which the Exchange is distributing to the shut-ins of remote places may bring marvelous cheer. Realizing fully the importance of the work, I hope another year will find me able and in a position to cooperate with you actively."

Each department of the work is in excellent condition. The Bible chairman has been able to supply requests for 25 Bibles and 18 Testaments. Worthy of mention here is the fact that, in answer to an appeal from Baroness Ida B. Kemeary, a large Bible donated by the Hyde Park Branch was sent last fall to distant Transylvania. The ever present need is for Bibles with large print, for persons who have none or for those whose failing eyesight prevents them from reading small type.

The Home Study work has been carried on by Mrs. Saville with unabated interest. Arrangements have been made for lessons by correspondence in spelling, English, writing, mathematics, drawing and dressmaking, with applicants from five states. Reports from students who began work last year show marked improvement. Innumerable calls for school-books have been received, either to supplement school work or to help mothers who are too far away from schools to send their children, and so are trying to teach them at home. Chairmen of the various Branches have responded willingly to the call for books. Much harder is it to find someone to take a student. But if we are to fulfill our contract, which promises lessons in various branches of study, we must have the cooperation of volunteers to teach applicants through correspondence. *Please help* is the earnest plea of the Home Study chairman.

Mrs. Stevens, chairman of the Libraries, has for her slogan,—"Always something in the air, some-

thing good for another year." We have here another chapter of her continued story. All the transfers, numbering eleven, have been completed, except one in Texas which is still pending. The Library list shows 118 cards. Twelve new libraries have been added since last November. One of the New Hampshire libraries,—a gift from Newburgh, N. Y.,—started at Littleton, N. H., and in one year and a half has been transferred to the fifth community. Needham Branch is now sending another fine collection of books over the same route. Late in November Rich Mountain, Neb., (a lookout station), sent an urgent appeal for reading before the roads became impassable and all communication with the outside world was cut off. Newburgh, N. Y., came to the rescue, and 50 books were immediately sent out, reaching the station in ample time. Try to picture living in such a place, and what it would mean to receive a gift affording so much enjoyment! With the help of twenty-four Branches, 3,367 volumes have been added to their circulation since May, 1921,—a fine record.

The wonderful success of the Sunshine bags leaves us all "enthused." How did we do it? All over the country the yellow bags have carried their appeal; and most hearty thanks are due to those Branches who by their contributions,—large or small,—have enabled Miss Jones to pay off a deficit of \$286.05, and still leave a balance in the bank to carry on another year. Across the continent came a check accompanied by their message,—". . . a small amount, but there are so many calls it must be spread thin in order to cover the ground at all." All Souls Branch, New York, has for the second time the honor of sending in the largest sum, \$42. The persistency of Mrs. Brush in keeping the little bag in evidence is accountable for this. Surely she is to be congratulated on her good work.

To one who is ever ready to lend a hand innumerable opportunities are ever arising. For this reason, Mrs. Sands' work this year cannot be adequately reported. She has kept her thirty correspondents, taking a new one only when someone dropped out. Thousands of stories and many books for pasting have been furnished by different people. The making of the scrap-books (especially those containing Burgess Bedtime Stories) and the pasting of cards have been taken over by four little girls in the neighborhood, who have formed a Lend a Hand Club. 250 postcards have been given away each month, and 100 pictures, pasted on heavy brown paper, have gone to schools where there were none. Gifts of magazines have made it possible for Mrs. Sands to send hundreds to individuals and to Miss Brown for teachers and schools. This spring Mrs. Sands received an offer of 100 books from a member of the Beverly Branch. Realizing the need for help on the educational side, she

made an appeal at the Alliance for children's stories and for light reading. Later a notice was read in church that the parish house would be open two days in the week. The response was most generous; 400 books were collected; three libraries have been sent away and two lots by parcel post. A new phase of her work is the cheer which she has imparted to the shut-ins in her own community. By enabling a tired mother to go out for an evening with her husband, by calling on an old couple too feeble to leave their home, by making a person who believes he has no chance in life feel that he has a friend to help, —a service has been rendered too valuable to be estimated.

At the Friday conference in April the illustrated lecture given by Miss Annie Brown at Bulfinch Place Chapel was most interesting to the large audience who greeted her. Starting with North Carolina, she took her hearers through many southern regions familiar to Cheerful Letter workers. Very illuminating were those pictures, showing in what a marked way the homes and schools have developed. The crying need throughout these places is for books,—more books, and especially children's well-chosen books. The Book Mission has promised 25,000, but at present only 11,000 have been sent.

During April 204 postals were sent to chairmen of the Branches asking for annual reports. A few have failed to reply; but the activities of the Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey and California Branches represent a tremendous amount of work. Bearing in mind the fact that many committees keep no records, the following itemized summary of articles sent will give a faint idea of what has been accomplished:—

There have been sent over 30,000 magazines (Needham alone sent 7,176); 4,500 books (First Parish, Brookline, is credited with 717); 23,000 cards of different kinds (Needham reports 3,256; 702 scrap-books (Providence, First Congregational, has made 202); 4,117 pictures; 2,576 papers; 815 bundles, packages, pound boxes or rolls of patchwork pieces; 116 miscellaneous parcels; and 330 boxes at Christmas time. The largest number of items given out by any one Branch is 13,135 by Needham. The Providence First Congregational Society has second place with a total of 6,221.

At a rough estimate, the Exchange has between 1,600 and 1,700 families listed, to say nothing of the number of children in each household.

Letters with their words of comfort and cheer mean more than we can imagine to many who, otherwise, would not get a breath from the outside world. A mother who is ill writes thus:—
“ . . . Gladys has been having quite a hard time. She gets up before daylight, cooks break-

fast, milks two cows, fixes lunches for her father and the boys, before going to school. Now that Cameron is back, he will milk. . . . No, I have never seen dear Mrs. Cameron, but we have a picture of her, and had corresponded with her so long she seemed like a very dear friend whom I had known personally. We can never forget her loving kindness. You members of the Cheerful Letter Club cannot realize the happiness your letters and magazines bring to so many people.”

Another writes:—“How are you? If I could only run in to see you, and throw my arms around your neck, and tell you how much you mean to me and how the reading matter helps!”

Such letters make you feel how good it is to be a *Cheerful Letter* worker.

Our advice is sometimes sought. A young woman in North Carolina has such faith in the *Cheerful Letter* work that she has asked for help in regard to the management of her home,—how to figure her household expenses economically. One of our most valued workers was ready to assist in solving this problem. Another inquiry comes from a woman of seventy who “dotes” on style books:—“Had I best cut the sleeves of my black silk waist off up to the shoulders, as they are in the *Vogue* magazine just received?”

Christmas work was carried on the same as last year. Correspondents were made happier by personal gifts. Distributing centres and institutions of all kinds were generously remembered. 15 boxes of toys, books and candy were packed by classes in a near-by Sunday School for distant families with young people. Since Christmas several of the classes and individual children have corresponded with these Cheerful Letter boys and girls, sending scrap-books, valentines and Easter cards. One of the mothers wrote that her children had never before seen a valentine, and were perfectly delighted.

This year the 140 inmates of the Cambridge City Home received each a small individual Christmas tree, stuck in a big red apple and trimmed with popcorn, candy and tiny amusing articles. Every two weeks since then a member has called, carrying with her candy, cakes, crackers or chocolate. As she becomes acquainted with the people, she procures special gifts to add to their happiness. But most of all she takes to them her helpful, friendly spirit, so they count the days between her visits.

This year several of our older members and most loyal workers have passed on to a higher sphere of usefulness. Their example should ever be a stimulus to us, to carry on the work left unfinished with the same courage and broadness of vision. The memory of Miss L. Freeman Clarke will long live among us. Interested in

the *Cheerful Letter* work from its inception, the first copy of her little paper,—*The Cheerful Letter*,—was published in June, 1892. Without remuneration, and with untiring devotion during thirty years, she culled here and there messages of love and hope to fill its pages. This loving service should never be forgotten.

It is gratifying that the subscription list of the paper has increased to 1,500 copies a month. More and more, through the generosity of the Branches, it finds its way from headquarters to the homes of shut-ins and people unable to pay for it, thus opening new life and thought to hundreds of deserving men and women.

Pleased as we are with the success of our work this season, there are still before us great possibilities for loving service. Persistent effort is needed to make this practical side of our faith more vital and effective. As we go our separate ways during the summer, may we meet again in the fall, with an awakened enthusiasm to:—

"Do all the good we can
In all the ways we can
To all the people we can."

Respectfully submitted,
ANNA H. HASTINGS,
Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, through the exchange of letters, and by gifts of books and magazines.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To give to those living far from church some of the helps which churches give. One good sermon or similar article is printed in each number. These sermons are never doctrinal, but present only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed on by all churches.

WHERE TO WRITE

1. *Letters paying for subscriptions to the paper*, fifty cents a year, should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

2. *Letters asking for correspondents, for books, magazines, cards, etc., also letters offering to give books, magazines, etc.*, should be sent to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 25 Fairmount Way, Quincy, Mass.

See special suggestions directly under the heading of the "Book and Magazine Club" in this number.

3. *Letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Mrs. George G. Saville, 30 Woodward Avenue, Quincy, Mass.

The Home Study Committee has on hand a variety of schoolbooks which may be used by students either at home or in the schoolroom. The aim of the teachers is to help in any study where help is needed. Often this may fit a person for a higher grade of work.

4. *Letters asking for music and letters offering music* should be sent to Mrs. Thomas Lacey, 35 East 30th Street, New York City, or to All Souls Church, Fourth Avenue and 20th Street, New York City.

There is more and more interest in "community" or neighborhood singing.

5. *Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries* should be sent to Mrs. H. A. Stevens, 76 Edgemere Road, Quincy, Mass.

A Circulating Library will be started in any small community needing one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references can be given. One hundred and eighteen libraries are now on our lists.

6. The Secretary of the Cheerful Letter Exchange, Mrs. Francis Hastings, Kendal Green, Mass., should receive the more general correspondence from workers on the local committees, or from others interested in the organization and its methods.

Notice to those who give:—

Only books of an instructive or wholesomely amusing character should be offered. Classics, educational works, and standard novels and magazines are always acceptable.

There is a large call for scraps of calico, gingham, and percale for patchwork.

To those who receive:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one ask for money or for clothing in the columns of this paper. The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to headquarters.